

SOVIET CINEMA



DON BROWN

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By Herbert Marshall

The cover-picture shows actors and producer together during the filming of "Peter the Great." From left to right: M. I. Jarov (Kamerny Theatre) who played Menshikov in the film, Honoured Artist V. M. Petrov, producer of the film, and N. K. Simonov (Leningrad State Dramatic Theatre) who plays the role of Peter.

SOVIET CINEMA

IN THE BEGINNING

THE Soviet film occupies a distinctive place in world cinema—as distinctive as that of U.S.A., as distinctive as that of France. Certain Russian films are recognised by all but the most jaundiced as representing the peak of cinema achievement at the time of their production—such films as *Potemkin*, *Earth*, *The Childhood of Maxim Gorky*, and *Three Songs of Lenin*. Yet there has been so far no comprehensive study of the Russian film.

In considering Soviet art forms in general, and cinema in particular, it is necessary to bear in mind the fundamental differences between the U.S.S.R. and the rest of the world. The Soviet Union is a land of unified planning, and centralised guidance of economic, political, cultural and artistic development in all fields.

Throughout the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the genius who led it into the new society which was born in 1917, one finds intermingled with economic and political decrees, similar serious and weighty pronouncements on artistic matters, particularly the art of the cinema.

“For us, the most important of all the arts is the cinema,” was how Lenin put the question in 1918.

And this realisation was acted upon. From that time began the history of the struggle for the Soviet cinema, economically and ideologically.

The cinema in Tsarist Russia was on a very low level. The producing companies were small concerns operating on normal capitalist lines, on a tiny scale, producing crude melodramas of a poor quality compared with the imported American and German films with which Russian cinemas were mostly filled. At the time of the October Revolution most of the Russian film magnates, as well as the cinema intelligentsia, such as it was, fled the country. All that was left in Moscow was a small studio with not much apparatus, still less of a qualified staff. Protozanov was the best-known of the old regime directors who came over wholly to the Bolsheviks and, curiously enough, the owner of the second and only other film concern in Moscow—Khanszhonkov—handed over his whole undertaking *en bloc* to the Soviet Government, and stayed to work in it as a technician.

Special cinemas were organised, and the first play-film to be made by them was prepared from a scenario by Lunarcharsky (Commissar for Education) in 1918. The cinema concerns throughout the country were nationalised in 1919.

Up to 1922, films were produced by committees and consisted mostly of chronicle films of May Day demonstrations, scenes at the front, the famine, the congresses, etc., in connection with which the name of the propagandist of documentary film first appears—Dziga Vertov. At the same time the State Institute of Cinema, founded in 1919, under the direction of Gardin (now People's Cinema Artist of the Republic) began producing short film plays with the group of Kuleshov.

KINO-EYE

Lenin placed great stress at that time on the importance of the documentary and chronicle film. This, however, was converted by Vertov and his school, "Kino-Eye," into a dogma:

"Only documental facts—no film-play illusions—down with the actor and scenery—long live the film of actuality."

Thus were produced the weekly chronicles and short documentaries *Kino-Pravda*, and the full-length documentary films *One-Sixth of the Earth*, *Strides of the Soviet*, etc.

Kuleshov, at the State Institute of Cinema, took the opposite view. He advocated the study of the American feature film, particularly the Western, and its adaptation to the Soviet cinema. His first attempt at this was a frank copy of the Wild West thriller entitled *Mr. West visits the Soviet Union*, which showed the adventures of a tourist who visits Russia fearing to be shot at every corner. One of the actors in this film, a student of the Institute, was Vsevolod Pudovkin—later to become one of the world's most famous directors.

Pudovkin now relates with pride the terrible difficulties that had to be overcome in the making of pictures in those early days. There was no coal, no fuel, no light, very little food, hardly room to work in. They studied in thick overcoats and felt boots—when they could get them. They had to gather together material for their scenery from all kinds of flotsam and jetsam. Even the projectors had to be hand-made. Every possible thing had to be economised. Every yard of film, every kopeck, had to be fought for. This accounts in part, no doubt, for the shortness of the shots in early Russian films.

Thus, in the midst of hunger and blockade, of cold and poverty, intervention and counter-revolution, Soviet cinema art was born.

FEATURE FILMS

I HAVE already mentioned the planning of cultural and artistic development in the U.S.S.R. Sceptics say that such planning or control must be detrimental to art. Yet it is interesting to note that the world-renowned silent films of the U.S.S.R. were practically all "made to order"—the order of the Soviet Government. Eisenstein's *Potemkin* was to be part of a series of films dealing with the 1905 Revolution and was planned in conjunction with the Government.

After his first apprenticeship with the Kuleshov group, Pudovkin made a film called *The Chess Player*, and a scientific film, *Conditioned Reflexes*, based on Professor Pavlov's researches.

Then came *Mother*, adapted from Maxim Gorky's novel. Here we see the next development of Soviet cinema, the beginnings of individual characterization—in the form of types. The use of types, that is, non-actors, or actors chosen principally for their appearance, whose acting, so to speak, is created in cutting (montage), later reached its limits in *Storm over Asia* by Pudovkin; *The General Line* of Eisenstein; and *Ivan*, by Dovzhenko.

Meanwhile, another director of first rank emerged from the Ukraine—Alexander Dovzhenko, who combines the culture of Eisenstein and the emotion of Pudovkin with the passion of national originality. Concurrently with the great historical films of Moscow and Leningrad, Dovzhenko made *Arsenal*, a powerful film of the Ukrainian revolution, followed by *Earth*, probably the most superb of peasant films, showing the new order in the village and the struggle for its creation merged with the eternal struggle of life and death.

NEW BABYLON

In Leningrad, Kozintzev and Trauberg, after their historical film of the Paris Commune, *New Babylon*, also attempted to deal with new problems, and produced the antithesis of *Ivan*—a film *Alone*, in which the city intelligentsia goes to the village, fighting the age-old traditions, building a new society and, at the same time, re-creating themselves.

But life goes faster than the films. The Soviet cinema industry still took too long to make its big pictures, anything from two to three years—so it was not surprising that often the product was out of date on its completion, and hence could not be shown.

The introduction of the sound film applied the brake. Once more the Soviet cinema had to start at the beginning, both technically and artistically, to master in two or three years what the

U.S.A. had been studying for fifteen years. For two or three years no film of significance emerged, nothing that can be compared with the best silent films.

The second Five-Year Plan commences—the country is now back to normal, goods appear everywhere in the shops, the collective farm becomes the predominant form in the village, the harvest is the biggest on record, there are diplomatic successes abroad, fulfilment of plans for heavy industry—"The last year of difficulty"—such was the slogan of 1932.

With all this comes an increased demand for cultural entertainment, more plays, more music, more films, more life! And lighter entertainment makes its appearance. The themes of personal relationships, of love, of the new attitude to work and society—these now come to the fore, but without being isolated from the mass.

Counter-Plan, by Ermler and Yutkevitch, is the first sound film of significance dealing with these problems. But it remained in splendid isolation while other directors either meditated lengthily over their scenario period or else tackled the more difficult problems of personal characterization through the classics.

SONGS OF LENIN

Dziga Vertov, still persistent in his documentalism, now produced probably his greatest film—greatest because of its content—*Three Songs of Lenin*. Such a theme could not fail to arouse the emotions of Soviet audiences.

A musical comedy film by Alexandrov, *Jazz Comedy*, introduced a new note to the Soviet screen with, however, very little Soviet content. It showed, however, that Moscow's Hollywood could do all the tricks of American cinema.

It was followed by *Circus*, which dealt with the problem of the colour bar in the United States and showed how the U.S.S.R. had solved such questions.

Then came a bombshell—a film by almost unknown directors which broke all records and filled the cinemas as no film had done since *Potemkin*, and caused more articles, more Press, more demonstrations than any film since the golden age of silent films—it was based on a theme that was generally considered to have become boring for Soviet audiences—the civil war. It turned upon the great friendship of a partisan hero after whom the film was named, Chapayev, with the Party leader in his division.

A new quality had entered the Soviet cinema, a synthesis of the best of the silent films with a masterful character presentation and story.

Chapayev was not an isolated event, for following rapidly upon its heels came *The Youth of Maxim* and *The Return of Maxim*, by Kozintsev and Trauberg, dealing with the evolution of a Bolshevik in the 1905 period, and *Peasants*, by Ermler, dealing with collectivization and the work of the Bolsheviks in the village.

With these fine films the Soviet cinema arrived at its fifteenth anniversary, and the Government and the Party showed their appreciation of its significance by rewarding the leading directors, cameramen, actors, administrators, etc., with the highest honours of the land—no other art has ever received so many titles.

Among the list of those honoured we find once more the name of Khanszhonkov—the former Russian capitalist who has now been given a life pension by the Soviet Government for his services to the revolutionary cinema.

Since that anniversary, there have been many films of outstanding significance, too many to mention here. *New Gulliver*, undoubtedly the finest puppet film ever made, and at the same time a full-length feature film, must be recorded. The producer, Ptushko, received the title "Honoured Art Worker" for his masterpiece, which took over two years in the making. He is now preparing a coloured puppet film.

COSTUME DRAMA

The historical costume drama is represented by the film *Peter the Great*, based on a scenario specially written by Alexei Tolstoy. The film shows Peter, not as a mere tyrant but as the ruthless representative of the progressive elements of the society of his day, fighting against the age-long backwardness of Mother Russia, scheming for developments which were only realized after the October Revolution. This was one of the most lavish productions of the last ten years, equalling Hollywood in its employment of thousands of extras.

A remarkable film for the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution, *The Last Night*, was produced by another young director, Raizman. The action takes place at the end of October, 1917, during the last night of the Kerensky regime in Moscow, before that city followed Petrograd in revolt. It affords another example of highly concentrated action in a very limited time, developing every character to the fullest extent.

These last two films present an interesting contrast to those made for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution: *Ten Days that Shook the World*, and *The End of St. Petersburg*, which had an action extending over a long period of time with very little development of character.

We from Kronstadt, by Dzigan and Vishnevsky, is the only modern film comparable in form as well as content with the classic

silents. It has been widely reviewed in London and needs no further comment.

A film that has received much acclaim is *Lenin in October*, by Michael Romm, who made *The Thirteen*. By its title it challenges comparison with Eisenstein's famous *October*, but cinematically it will not bear comparison. One of the greatest actors in the Soviet Union, Shehukin, plays Lenin with extraordinary fidelity, but though one pays tribute to his wonderful make-up, voice and gesture, there is a tendency to be too self-conscious and deliberate. The film is notable in portraying for the first time Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, Lenin and others at their famous meeting on the eve of the Revolution, at which Lenin attacked Zinoviev and Kamenev for their betrayal of the Central Committee's decision.

This film was very popular in the Soviet Union, but as a work of art it lacks the imagination and inspiration of the silent classics on the same theme. One is too conscious that everything has been checked up with the documents and facts.

Pudovkin made a film based on the life of *Suvorov*, one of the greatest military strategists of Russia, and *Minin and Pozharsky*, the story of two great patriot defenders of old Russia. Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*, deals with a great Russian leader of the thirteenth century who drove the Teutonic Knights from Russian soil. Its effect was heightened by the splendid music written for it by Sergei Prokofiev. Released for the screen in 1938, with a theme 600 years old, it had a message which was topical then and is still more so to-day.

2,000 SOLDIERS

This film contained one of the great spectacles of the screen, the battle on the ice of Lake Peipus. An unexpected attack by Nevsky on the Germans forces them to retreat across the frozen lake, which cracks under the weight of their accoutrements, and they are engulfed. For this, Eisenstein had a special artificial iced lake built. The number of soldiers engaged was 2,000.

The "German invaders" were members of a school of physical culture dressed in thirteenth century armour. The whole of the engulfing was conducted by military engineers. The ice, weighing 17½ tons, floated on hidden rubber pontoons. At the command of an officer, hidden from the camera, the "invaders" slowly let out the air from the rubber pontoons, which gradually sank with the soldiers. Immediately the scene was shot there was a roll-call to make sure that nobody remained under the ice. All precautions were taken, with expert life-savers, divers and safety-first men. The whole scene was shot without any untoward incident.

Remember this film was started in 1937 and how prophetically correct it was can now be seen.

Further evidence of the awareness in the Soviet Union of the menace of Fascism is provided by films dealing specifically with Nazi oppression in Germany. In 1935 Gustav Wangenheim, a German refugee, made *Der Kampf* (The Struggle), a film dealing with the Reichstag fire and the Leipzig trial. In 1938 Roshal made *The Oppenheims*, based on Feuchtwanger's novel of the Nazi war against culture; and Minkin and Rappaport made *Professor Mamlock*, based on Friedrich Wolf's play on anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany. This last film, once banned by the British censor, was released here (heavily cut) after the outbreak of war and achieved a great popular and artistic success.

CHILDREN'S FILMS

A SOVIET Children's Film Studio was formed in 1926. This new departure meant now that a centre was created to specialise in children's feature and story films. Amongst the outstanding films to come from this studio are such masterpieces as the trilogy on Gorky, of which the first and third parts have been seen in England, under the titles *The Childhood of Maxim Gorky* and *My Universities*. The second, *Out in the World*, has yet to be seen here.

The director, M. Donskoy, has proved himself to be one of the great masters of the cinema, for there is no doubt that *Childhood* has re-created Gorky's own work in another medium to perfection. So often the transition from book to film ruins or completely distorts the original.

Another beautiful film to come out of this studio is *Lone White Sail*, directed by V. Ligoshin. It is a children's adventure story immediately following on the revolt of the warship "Potemkin." This studio has produced a number of full-length fairy tale films in colour, such as *The Little Hunchbacked Horse* (directed by A. Rou). In production values, these films rank as high as any produced in Hollywood, even though they still use the two colour system.

One of the latest full-length fairy tales is called *The Magic Seed*, based on the Aladdin myth in a Russian setting. Like *The Little Hunchbacked Horse*, it has recently been exhibited in London.

Parallel with the development of the great Russian film productions ran the activities of the studios of the non-Russian Republics. Dovzhenko continues to produce his Ukrainian masterpieces and made on the suggestion of Stalin, a film about the Ukrainian Chapayev, *Shchors*, bearing his name.

WAR FILMS

SINCE the war the Soviet cinema has mobilised all its forces for work of national importance. Over 160 cameramen, many of whom have been killed in action, were engaged along the vast front in 1942. Their work was used not only in newsreels, but in the making of full-length films, such as *One Day at War* (in which the whole 160 participated). This film was a remarkable record of one day on the Soviet front, filmed simultaneously from the Finnish lakes to the Black Sea coast. This film had a considerable success in this country.

The Documentary and Newsreel studios record systematically the whole of the war activity behind as well as in the line. One of the most impressive films produced as a result of their work was *Justice is Coming*, the record of the Kharkov trial of war criminals, one of the grimmest cinematic works ever produced, which impressed all who saw it by the stark simplicity of its recordings.

This film when shown at the Tatler cinema in London, did business far above the average for that house, although it synchronised with the early stages of the flying bomb, when almost every other cinema in London was registering a low record in box office receipts.

Other documentaries which were highly praised by Press and public alike (or that section of the latter which was fortunate enough to see them) were : *The Defeat of the Germans near Moscow*, *The Battle for the Ukraine*, *The Drive to the West*, and *The Partisans*. The last-named was shown in this country with a commentary by J. B. Priestley, and was received with enthusiasm wherever it was exhibited. But bookings were far fewer than its merits justified.

An interesting wartime innovation is the speed-up in production as a result of the division of labour, whereby all feature directors make shorts and two- or three-reel film-plays, which are tied up with some transitional scenes and made into feature length. This enables the time of making to be cut by two-thirds. The first of these shorts were issued separately (with English dialogue for exhibition in this country and the U.S.A.). They were *A Hundred for One*, *Strong Point 42*, *Three in a Shellhole*. It is a feature of Soviet shorts and composite films of the kind described that they cover the whole international field of the anti-Nazi struggle, and not just the Soviet front.

As well as numerous documentary films of this kind, the Soviet News Reels Studios have produced a weekly newsreel with sometimes extra issues, and this year (1944) a new series of regular

newsreels was started entitled *News of the Day* and *Front Line News*. These present popular news in a more snappy form.

The News Reels Studios are now quite separate from the documentary film studios, to which leading feature film producers have been allocated as supervisors, this, as a result, it is said, of that superb film *The Battle of Russia* made by a feature film producer, Frank Capra, from Soviet documentary film material. An example of how Soviet authorities are quick to learn from outside experience.

CAMERA MEN AT WAR

HERE is an account from the Soviet Press of cameramen at the front, which gives an intimate insight into their great work.

"News reels are always showing us the exploits of pilots, infantry, artillery fighters, mortar-gunners, tankists, scouts and guerillas. But there is one class of front-line heroes who run the same risks, are just as daring, but who are never featured in the camera because it is they who crank the camera.

"Here are two of them—Captain Leonid Kotlyarenko and First Lieutenant Semyan Stoyanovsky.

"Both were born in 1917, both of them graduated from the Cameraman Department of the Moscow Cinema Institute in 1940, both were serving in the army when the war broke out and on the third day were already at the front. For almost the entire period they have been working side by side. . . .

"'How do you make your shots during a battle?' I asked the friends.

"'Not so much time to go in for film composition,' answered Stoyanovsky. 'The Fritzies don't even give us a chance to focus decently, so we simply mark our target and shoot without any preliminaries.'

"'And how does it turn out?'

"'We've got the knack already, and feel for the right place.'

"'When the Germans approached Vladikavkaz,' interrupted Kotlyarenko, 'I filmed the defence in the very city. Then I filmed the smashing of the same enemy groupings in the same place. And it's a funny thing—usually you hunt for good material, but here I shot everything around me on a 360 degree range and everything I shot was used.'

"'What have been some of the tightest corners in your work?'

“ ‘All kinds,’ said Kotlyarenko. ‘For example, during the summer of 1942 when two of us took shots of an armoured train near Taganrog. We worked during heavy artillery fire . . . everybody else was in the train with a coat of armour around him, and there were the two of us outside, a fine pair of targets. But you couldn’t very well film the train from the inside. Senya ! You tell about the landing.’

“BLACK AS YOUR HAT !

“And Stoyanovsky began.

“ ‘It was in the autumn of 1943 . . . Cold ! With a northeaster blowing. Night as black as your hat. After the preparatory bombardment, a landing in the Crimea from the Kerch peninsula began. This was on the 3rd November, and, on the dawn of the 4th, operator Kaznacheyev and I got in a speed boat and started out across the strait from the tongue of land called “Chushka” in the wake of our landing party. Chushka is about ten miles long and about thirty yards wide. Our boat was under enemy gunfire. We had a distance of only two and a half miles to go, but the water was completely mined, and German planes kept circling above us. You can imagine that our chances were slim for a safe landing, and our feelings were according ! But that was only at first. Then our ears got used to the din and the work gripped us and we were so eager to record the heroism of our fighters that we forgot all danger. Besides which, you can’t help being brave when you’re surrounded by our Red Army men.

“ ‘We front-line cameramen take professional pride in being amongst the first to break into newly-liberated towns together with our advance units. That’s the only way to catch striking combat moments, the flight of the Nazis, the capture of prisoners, and especially that thrilling moment when the inhabitants greet our troops:

“ ‘We were lucky enough to be among the first units to enter Mozdok, Prokhladny, and Georgievsk.’

“ ‘How do we move around ?’

“ ‘At first they gave us half-ton trucks. But after a few months’ experience during which we often found ourselves without a roof over our heads, we made our own machine, enclosed it with felt, set up a stove, furnished it with tables, lamps and divans, and now our truck has become a fine living-room office, and workshop rolled into one. And that’s how we carry on with our front line work.’

“ ‘We’re both witnesses of and participants in this war,’ concluded Stoyanovsky. ‘Our newsreels are live documents for public approval. This stimulates us, and fills us with a sense of responsibility, and enables us to forget the hazard of our work.’”

TECHNICAL FILMS

FROM the very first days of the war Soviet scientific and educational-technical cinematography transferred its attention to the production of military and defence films. The personnel of educational cinematography was confronted with the task of assisting the Red Army in training reserves, of producing films which would help newly formed units to make the best use of their armaments and to master the technique and tactics of modern warfare in the shortest possible time.

During this first period, educational-instructive films, such as *How to Fight Enemy Tanks*, *How to Recognise Enemy Aircraft*, *How to Combat Enemy Mines*, *Learn to Handle the Enemy's Arms*, and others of the same trend were produced. Many of them were made to illustrate the special programme used in the course for universal compulsory training. These titles included *The Soldier in the Ranks*, *Be a Sharpshooter*, *A Sniper's Gun*, *Pocket Artillery*, *The Anti-Tank Gun*, *Infantry against Aircraft*, and special series such as *Ski Training for Soldiers*, *The Degtyarev Machine Gun*, and *Behind a Smokescreen*.

The second year of the war confronted the educational cinematography with new tasks. Now each military theme was considered from the point of view of the tactics of offensive operations in contrast to the active defence character of the films produced in 1941. This explains why films on tactics predominated among the productions of war films in 1942.

A group of cinema workers headed by directors V. Schneider, V. Suteyev and E. Kuzis, went to the region round Stalingrad and also to the Western Front where they filmed documentary material right on the spot, their cameras recording the fire nests and the strong points from which the Germans had been ousted. Prominent military specialists at the front lent active assistance in the filming of this picture, *German Defence and How to Smash It*.

Forcing Rivers, a film directed by N. Sokolov, deals with a very pertinent theme in modern warfare. Ferrying troops across a river in the face of heavy enemy fire is one of the most complicated and involved operations of modern warfare. This film presents the whole operation, from the reconnaissance of the adjacent terrain and the sector where the crossing is to be effected to the engineering work and the actual crossing of the river. Another tactical film—*Reconnaissance and Surmounting Obstacles in Offensive Operations*, directed by Z. Drapkin—depicts the operations of sapper troops which ensure the uninterrupted movement of tanks, artillery and infantry.

SPREADING KNOWLEDGE

One of the most important problems at the beginning of the war was that of the military preparedness of the population and of popularising military knowledge among the general public.

A series of instructive propaganda films aiming to acquaint the general public with the rudiments of military training was released during the first months of the war. Some of the titles in this series were *Learn How to Handle a Light Machine Gun*, *The Self-Loading Rifle*, *How to Dig In*.

The population of Moscow, Leningrad and other front-line cities learned the tactics of civil defence from the A.R.P. film series: *What to do when the Alert Sounds*, *How to Black-out Your Home*, *How to Put Out Fire Bombs*, *How to Build Warm and Gas-proof Spit Trenches*. These films greatly helped in training the population to combat enemy air raids.

Among the popular military films produced during the first months of the war mention may be made of the historical film-sketch by Merited Arts Worker Kaufman, entitled *So It Was : So It Will Be*, describing the rout of the Germans in the Ukraine in 1917. Here in vivid episodes was the story of how the Germans invaded the Ukraine in 1917 with the fond hope of turning it into a colony of the German Reich, how the whole Soviet people turned to smite the Germans in revenge for the blood they had shed, the pillage and violence they had wreaked everywhere.

MEDICAL FILMS

Special problems of army medical service were treated in films produced for medical courses and schools. These included *Military Field Surgery*, *The Treatment of Gunshot Wounds*, *Cranial-cerebral Wounds*, *Bone Stretching* and *Therapeutic Physical Culture in Treating War Injuries*. The subject of first aid and surgical treatment of wounded was presented in the following films:—*Know How to Give First Aid*, *The Prophylaxis of Frostbite*, *Initial Treatment of Wounds*, *Therapeutic Evacuation Service*, *War Medicine at the Western Front*.

A popular presentation of the role of medicine in the present war was given in the film *Red Army Medical Service*, directed by V. Korin and T. Lukashevich, now available in English from the Soviet Film Agency.

This picture acquainted the general public with the system and organisation of medical service for both wounded at the front and in medical institutions in the interior. The film shows how first aid treatment is rendered to the wounded during battle, the heroic and selfless work of the company medical personnel; the work of the regimental aid post, the advanced dressing station, the field mobile and the clearing evacuation hospital. The film

included actual scenes of operations performed by Academician N. Burdenko, Chief Surgeon of the Red Army and his assistant, Professor S. Gergolav.

Another film, *Surgery of the Peripheral Nerves*, with an English commentary by Dr. E. Loutit, is now to be had from the Soviet Film Agency.

Revival of Living Organisms is a film showing some of the most amazing experiments in the history of science, the problem of the resuscitation of life. It shows how dogs which are clinically dead from ten to fifteen minutes are brought back to life. The experiments here shown were made before the war and have now proved themselves of the highest value in that Red Army men "dead" for many minutes have been brought back to life. This film is available in English from the Soviet Film Agency.

Another short film of medical and human interest, entitled *A Rare Operation*, shows a Red Army officer who has been shot in the heart and faced it would appear with inevitable and an almost immediate death. The operation reveals the bullet is inside the heart. The surgeon extracts it, sews up the puncture and the heart stops beating. Massage is applied, artificial respiration and injections and slowly the heart starts beating again. The same film shows how two months later the same Red Army officer, his wound healed, puts on his uniform and goes back to the front to fight again.

DOCUMENTARIES

THE film *Siberia in Wartime*, produced by Honoured Art Worker M. Kaufman and directed by Y. Zadoroshin and A. Litvinov, tells how in the stern days of war Siberia undertook to fill the gap left in production by the loss of the districts temporarily occupied by the Germans. People from the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Leningrad, forced to leave their homes by the hated invaders, came to remote Siberia in the East to help start factories evacuated from the front-line zones and to build new factories where they could forge formidable armaments for revenge. It shows how the vast natural resources of Siberia are being converted into armaments that lay the enemy low.

Behind the Urals is a film of a similar nature, showing for the first time the great new industrial towns that have sprung up in the depths of Russia and whence came the staggering flow of arms that surprised the Germans and the world.

SCIENTIFIC

Such popular scientific pre-war films as *Pushkin's Manuscripts*, *The Tretyakov Gallery* and *In the Depths of the Sea*, testified to the great possibilities open to cinematography in this particular field. These films showed that their directors had found a special style for this type of picture, a system and means of expression which essentially differed from those of full-length films, although the popular scientific film made full use of the experience gained by the former type.

The director of a popular scientific film must be both investigator and an artist. He must combine the curiosity of the scientist with the fervour and fantasy of the artist. Work has already begun on a number of such films. They encompass the most diverse spheres of science, technique and culture.

Stalin prizewinner A. Zguridi made a series of popular films of natural selection in the process of development of the animal and plant world—*In the Depths of the Sea*, *The Force of Life*, *In the Sands of Central Asia*. This last film is now available in England—a copy was presented to the Royal Zoological Society by the Soviet Film Agency. Zguridi has started work on a film called *White Fang*, based on the story of the same name by Jack London.

Up to now films on biology have restricted their scope to documentation of actual phenomena in nature, but the experience already acquired in this field will now enable scientific cinematography to undertake a more involved task, that of reproducing one or another phenomenon in nature. The struggle for life and existence in the animal world will be shown in a film presenting the life history of a wolf family in all its relations and with its environment and with man.

The director, N. Doling, is engaged in preliminary work for a film on biology to be called *The Law of Love*, a film demonstrating the maternal instinct in nature, the feeling of parental loyalty in the animal world.

RECORDING THEATRE ART

Work has also begun on a film describing the best actors of one of the most famous theatres of modern times—the Moscow Art Theatre. This film, to be directed by Yurenev, will deal with the problems of the actor's art and will show the culture and skill of this theatre's finest actors—Kachalov, Moskvina, Khmelov and others. Basing its material on concrete examples taken from classical and modern repertory the film is to show whence the Art Theatre, as a theatre of vital truth, draws its realism; how the

production of a new play is effected—from the first reading of the script to the portrayal of each character in the finished performance. Regisseurs of the Art Theatre are to take an active part in the making of this film which will be a sort of scientific documentary description of one of the most significant phenomena in the history of the Russian theatre and of Russian culture.

Besides popularising the achievements of science and technique, the monthly film review of that name devotes considerable attention to the people who introduce new methods and efficiency in production. Special issues and separate items in the review are given over to descriptions of how labour efficiency in wartime is constantly being increased by the resourcefulness and inventiveness displayed by workers.

JUVENILE NEWSREELS

PIONEER WORLD, a special newsreel for Soviet schoolchildren, is one of the most popular issues of the Central Studio of Documentary Films. Originated and launched thirteen years ago by Arsha Avanesova, its permanent director, it has filled a great need.

From their own newsreel young Soviet filmgoers see how children live in different parts of the vast Soviet country. Children of the south who have never seen snow look wide-eyed at children of the distant north, smothered in furs, riding to school behind teams of reindeer. Little Ukrainians and Byelorussians are charmed by the deft hands of Uzbek and Tadjik children picking cotton at record speed. Young fishermen on the banks of the Volga watch their far-eastern comrades hunting in the *taiga*.

Pioneer World records life at Soviet schools, children's clubs, manual training shops, sports stadiums and camps. During the war it has featured the adventures of evacuees in their new surroundings.

Arsha Avanesova, the director, herself has two children who were evacuated on the outbreak of war to Alma Ata, the capital of Soviet Kazakhstan.

Pioneer World reflects the initiative, energy and inquisitiveness of Soviet children, of young people working in factories and collective farms, of little warriors who remained on occupied territory and helped the partisans.

TRAINING

A UNIQUE feature of the Soviet cinema is its planned education of new forces for cinema art and the cinema industry. There are Higher Institutes of the Cinema in Moscow and Leningrad, at which the training of directors, cameramen, scenario-writers and actors is undertaken with, of course, men and women having equal opportunity to study.

The Institute's training is given free of charge, and each student receives a stipend from the State so that he can continue his studies without financial worry or diverting his energy to "working his way through college."

Both institutes are equipped with their own studio and every kind of cinema apparatus—rehearsal rooms, art rooms, laboratories, etc. Furthermore, they have unique international film libraries.

When the present writer was in the Moscow Institute in 1930 to study in the Directors' Faculty, the course spread over four and a half years. About two-thirds of this time was devoted to theoretical and practical work in the Institute itself, and about one-third to practical work in the actual cinema studios or on location. Work in the Institute took place mostly in the autumn, winter and early spring, and consisted, in the case of the directors' faculty of nearly thirty subjects, including philosophy, political economy, sociology, the fine arts (all of them!), literature (Western European and Russian), history of the world cinema and theatre, scenario writing and montage, play and film production and technical subjects directly associated with the cinema, photography, lighting, make-up, set designing, studio organisation, etc.

EISENSTEIN THE TEACHER

The great director Eisenstein is a Professor at the Institute, and his particular subject is the theory of film direction. In this course he synthesises the knowledge gained in other classes. Here is a practical example of his unique teaching methods.

Our particular faculty was asked to prepare a theatrical analysis of Julius Caesar's assassination in the scene from Shakespeare's play.

For this purpose the whole class of about thirty students was divided into four groups, each group had to stage a theatrical production of the scene and enact it itself. It did not have to be a finished production but only from the director's point of view, i.e., to know the theme of the scene, its build-up, its climaxes, its *mise-en-scene*, etc.

HERBERT MARSHALL, author of this booklet, went to study at the Soviet Higher Institute of Cinema under Eisenstein and others in 1930. Graduating in 1935, he commenced work as a producer in film, stage and radio in the U.S.S.R. Returning to England in 1938, he continued with the same kind of work. His production of *Thunder Rock* in 1940 was acclaimed as one of the high spots of the London stage that year.

Since 1941 he has been preparing Soviet films for English showing, and, along with Ivor Montagu has edited a series of books on Soviet life and literature.

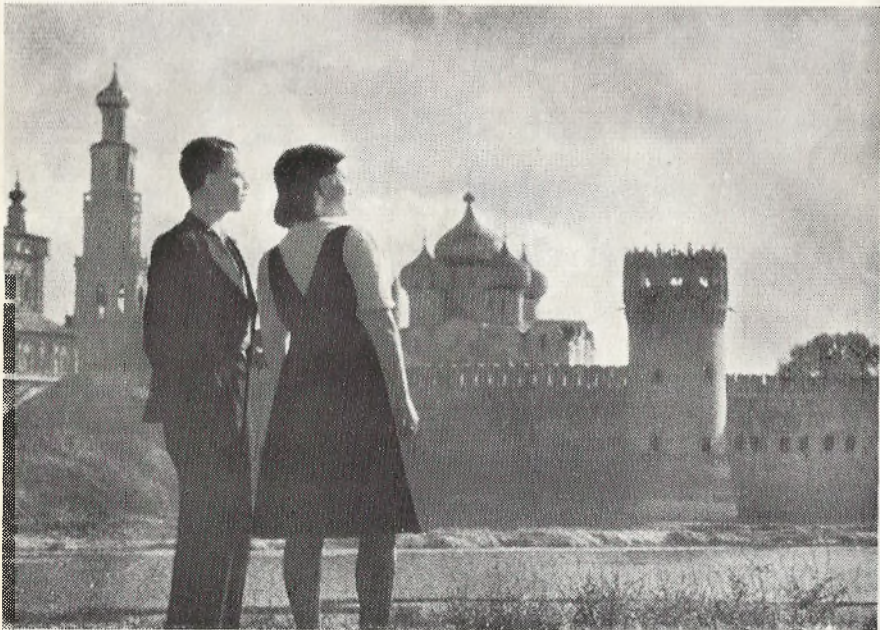
Below, is the Film Institute where Herbert Marshall studied in Moscow. The Institute has now been moved to a more modern building. In Tsarist days the old building was the famous Yar Restaurant, favourite haunt of Rasputin.



CHILDREN'S

Left : One of the five Children's Cine-Theatres in Moscow. Adults are only admitted if accompanied by a child ! Also housed in this building are lecture halls and exhibitions concerning cinema and theatre.

Below : A scene from the new Children's Studio film *Zoya*—based on the life of the partisan girl who was hanged by the Nazis. Producer—Lev Arnshtam.

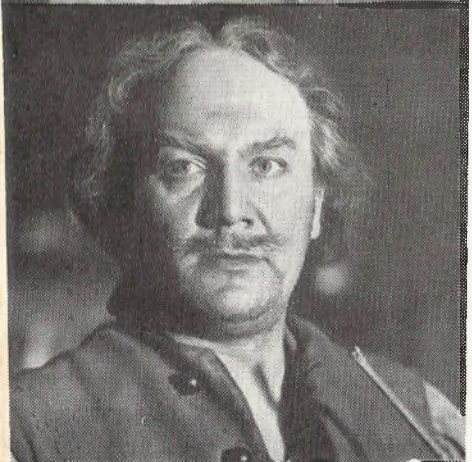


CINEMA

Right : Gulliver in Lilliput—a scene from the unique film *Modern Gulliver*, which has a cast of one human and hundreds of puppets. Produced by Ptuskhó, leading Soviet puppet artist.

Below : The three child actors in *Lone White Sail*—the boys are Pyotr Runge and Igor Boot.





CAMERAMEN



Above : Honoured Art Worker M.I. Romm was awarded a Stalin Prize for his production of *Lenin in October* and *Lenin* in 1948.

Left column from top :

Boris Blinov, Honoured Artist of the R.S.F.S.R., played Furmanov in *Chapeyev*, and Morozov in *Natasha*.

Tamara Makarova, Stalin Prizewinner, in *Masquerade* and *The New Teacher*.

Nikolai Simonov as Peter in *Peter I*.

Below : A cinema in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan.





AND STARS



*Above : Leonid Trauberg, who was co-director with Kozintsev of *New Babylon*, the *Maxim Gorky* trilogy, and *Viborg Side*.*

*Right column from top : Zoya Fyodorova, star of *Natasha* and *Musical Story*.*

*Nikolai Mordvinov, Honoured Artist in *Masquerade*.*

*Oleg Zhakov, Honoured Artist of the R.S.F.S.R., played Rolf in *Professor Mamlock*.*

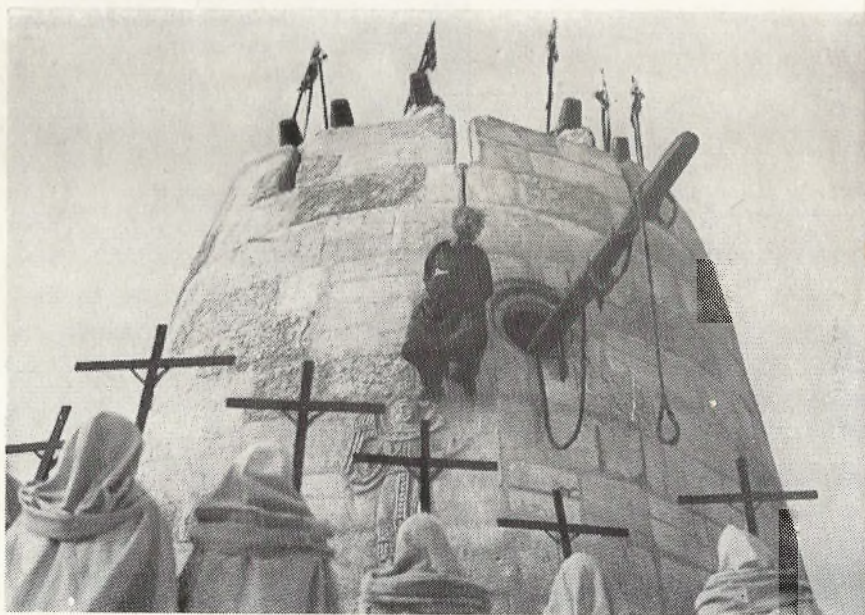




HISTORICAL AND

Left : A. Yachniski as Prince Paul and N. P. Cherkasov as Suvorov, in *Suvorov*.

Below : A scene from *Alexander Nevsky*, showing the Teutonic Knights and their priests with one of their victims. The battle on the ice in this film is a memorable piece of cinema.



DOCUMENTARY

Right : Washing clothes in the snow of a Leningrad street—a scene from the documentary war film *Leningrad Fights*.

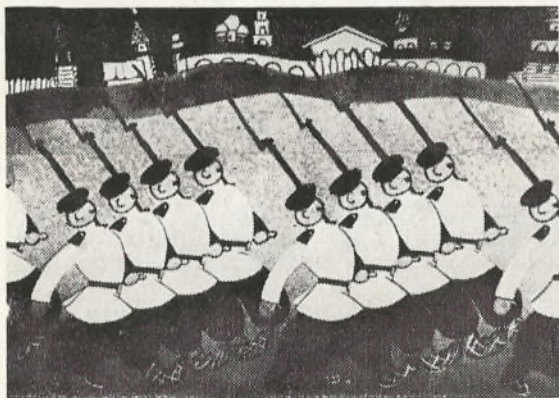


Below : People's Artist V. O. Massalitinova as the dairy woman in *Professor Mamlock*. The milk-cans were used as a means of distributing illegal leaflets in Germany.



LIGHTER VEIN

Right: A scene from the new operetta *They Met in Moscow*, directed by Ivan Piriev. A memorable musical with a love story between two farm workers of different nationalities.



Left: A scene from cartoon film, showing Czarist soldiers on the march. Cartoons have had increasing vogue during the war.

Right: A crazy scene from the film "Volga-Volga."



Then each group went through the *mise-en-scene* under Eisenstein in front of the rest of the class. Each group was criticised by the whole faculty and its teacher. Furthermore, each individual had to work it out on paper clearly and distinctly, so that at any time it could be reproduced exactly as the director had planned; after this every student was asked by Eisenstein to work out for himself on paper the cinema montage of the same scene based on his preliminary work with the group.

In the first stage this montage was to be as for silent cinema with the minimum of sub-titles. Every student, however badly or well he could draw, had to sketch each shot in this montage sequence, that is, he had to be able to put on paper enough of his visual ideas so that his conception could be clearly understood and carried out by the cameraman.

The next stage would be the working-out of the same sequence in sound-film and then in colour-film. In this particular example alone it will be seen that Eisenstein took his students step by step through the evolution of cinema art.

The separate arts, as studied in the other classes, had their synthesis in the theatre, then in the silent film and were then finally synthesised in a sound-colour film.

The results were fascinating. Out of four different theatrical productions of the scene came thirty different cinema treatments of the scene, clearly designed on paper.

MONTAGE

Another method in the training of the basic theory of montage was to give a student a famous painting, a static two-dimensional art-work, and ask him to transmute that painter's particular subject and treatment into cinema treatment*.

This meant that first of all the student director had to analyse the theme, the subject matter, the idea and social outlook of the painting, and then its composition—graphic, colour, light. Then he had to proceed to find its equivalent elements in the dynamic four-dimensional form of the cinema.

The recently published book *The Film Sense*, by Eisenstein, is based on lectures given by him in the Institute. From this it will be seen how complex and erudite was his particular course.

Alongside with this theoretical subject the student-director would then go into his Institute Studio and carry into practice a short cinema sequence that he would have worked out during the theoretical work. He would then have to collaborate practically with student-cameramen and student-actors.

As an example of another side of the work, actual montage was studied under the famous woman film director, Esther Shub, who would give a sequence from a classic film and ask the students to

re-edit it in their own way. They would then see the results on the screen, mutually criticise it and draw their own conclusions.

In the study of music, student musicians from the Conservatoire of Music would come to the Institute for a particular class. A quartette, for example, would play chamber music and on the spot the teacher would analyse every aspect of the work from the musical to the social.

PRACTICAL WORK

The practical work in the film studios themselves was a progressive course, i.e., a student-director of the first year in the Institute would go as a fourth assistant—a clapper-boy—to a particular group. The second year, if his previous work was satisfactory, he would go one up the scale and so on until he became an assistant director, having gone through the whole routine of practical studio procedure. So that before he actually graduated, the Institute could decide, on the results of his progress in the Institute and the Studios, whether he should specialise in say, documentary films, scientific films, children's films, feature films, etc., and according to this grading he would graduate from the Institute and go straight to work. In the Soviet Union one does not have the idiotic situation where a student finishes school holding a paper diploma in his hand and cannot find anywhere to work.

Furthermore, in the distribution of students to studios, his nationality is taken into consideration, so that if he comes from Armenia or Georgia, in all likelihood he will go back to the Armenian or Georgian film studios for his practical work, unless he himself expresses the wish to do otherwise. At the time when I was studying at the Institute there were about thirty nationalities represented. In my own particular study group was a Russian peasant, an Armenian, a Korean, and myself, an Englishman. Apart from the other Institutes, Moscow has an Institute for the training of cinema technical workers, and a Scientific Cinema Research Institute, dealing with such problems as colour, stereoscopic films, etc., for example. Moscow now has a cinema projecting stereoscopic films. From all accounts it appears that they have solved the problem.

ORGANISATION

THE whole of the film industry of the Soviet Union is controlled by the All-Union Committee for Cinema Affairs, under the chairmanship of Ivan Bolshakov. This is part of the Council for People's Commissars. There are film production studios in each of the separate Republics, the Moscow Potilikha

being the largest, containing four main groups for the production of feature films. At the outbreak of war there were 11 film studios for the production of feature films. Four of them are of All-Union significance—"Mosfilm" in Moscow, "Lenfilm" in Leningrad, Film Studios at Yalta in the Crimea, the Children's Film Studio in Moscow, which produces feature films specially for child and youth audiences, many of which, however, turn out to be of great interest to adults. There are also National Studios in the main non-Russian Republics.

At the end of the Second Five-Year Plan the productivity of all these studios was about 110 full-length feature sound-films per year.

Future plans included the building of new studios in Byelorussia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Middle Asia, and the projected output was to be increased to 150 full-length sound-films a year. It is clear, however, that even this quantity was far below the demands of the vast population of the myriad nationalities of the Soviet Union.

The reconstruction of the Soviet cinema and its basis actually began to take place in 1935. Existing studios were adapted to sound-film and new technical factories were built for the production of cinema apparatus of every kind. In 1936 there were five such factories, six chemical factories for making and distributing film stock, eight factories for making copies of completed films; then there is a Building Trust specially concerned with the planning and building of new cinemas.

In the Second Five-Year Plan new technical film studios were constructed in Moscow and Leningrad, and the output was increased to 130 full-length sound-films for educational purposes a year. At the same time, over the periods of the First and Second Five-Year Plans there was a very big development in the production of Soviet newsreels. The State Trust Soyuzkinozhroniki consists of four big studios in Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov and Rostov, and thirteen production bases in Republican and provincial centres. In the Second Five-Year Plan new newsreel studios were built in Kiev, Khabarovsk and Alma Ata. In 1935 yearly production of newsreels amounted to 600 issues, in 1937 to over 1,000.

STOCK AND APPARATUS

PRIOR to the Five-Year Plans the Soviet Union imported all its cinema stock from abroad. In the First Five-Year Plan two film stock studios were built. In 1935 they produced 120 million metres of film a year; in 1937 a new film factory was finished in Kazan with an output of 200 million metres, and

in 1938, 320 million metres per year were produced, and thus placed the Soviet Union in the third place (after the U.S.A. and Germany) in the world for production of film stock.

New factories for the production of copies of films were built in the First Five-Year Plan in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Tiflis. In 1936 construction was begun of new big factories for making copies of complete films in Kazan and Pushkino. Thus, before the war, the total possible output in these factories was 250 million metres of film, or 100,000 full-length films.

CINEMA FACTORIES

A series of specialised enterprises were built for the production of cinema apparatus in Leningrad, Odessa and Kuibishev. In Moscow a new Experimental Factory Institute was built to carry on research work in new developments of cinema technique and to produce apparatus for sub-standard films. A number of factories of the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry participated in the production of light apparatus, electrical cinema apparatus, etc. In 1935 there were 30,000 stationary and mobile types of cinema projection in use. Of these 10,200 were in the towns and 19,800 in the villages (not counting schools and the Red Army). In 1936 there were 9,000 sound projectors in use.

The Third Five-Year Plan had as its aim increasing the number to 50,000 standard and 40,000 sub-standard, with 35,000 electrical generating apparatus for mobile screens. How far the plan was fulfilled at the outbreak of war is, at this present moment, difficult to ascertain.

The accommodation for spectators calculated on the basis of annual occupation of seats rose as follows :—

1928, 310,000,000 seats ; 1935, 625,000,000 seats ; 1936, 710,000,000 seats ; 1939, 950,000,000 seats, and it was planned to increase this to 2,700 millions by 1942. This plan was rudely interrupted by the war.

SUB-STANDARD FILMS

IN 1935 the Soviet Union began production of sub-standard films and apparatus ; 4,600 sub-standard projectors and 3,000,000 metres of non-flam film were produced. In 1936 they produced 6,500 silent sub-standard projectors and 10,000,000 metres of film. The Plan envisaged that production was to increase output to 20,000 16 mm. sound projectors a year, and at the end of the third Five-Year Plan (1944) to 40,000 sound projectors,

A new feature of Soviet cinematography was the production of 16 mm. projection apparatus specially for home service, and an organisation was developed whereby any of the Soviet films could be hired on 16 mm., complete with projector and projectionist, who would go anywhere to club or home and give a private screening. Just before the war, the Cinema Research Institute had perfected its 16 mm. camera which was already being put into production so that eventually any person could become an amateur cinema photographer. This was linked up with the general policy of decreasing working hours in which the whole population would enjoy more time for creative leisure. Already music, drama, etc., play a colossal part in their leisure hours, and now amateur cinematography was coming to take its place as a hobby.

The production of films and all kinds of film stock and apparatus is also controlled by the All-Union Committee for Cinema Affairs.

In relation to the Republican organisations the Cinema Committee fulfils a plan of regularising the functions and supplying them with film stock and apparatus. The Union Republics have their own Cinema Committees for the production of films and cinema development, which are directly under the control of the Council of People's Commissars for these Republics.

CENSORSHIP

A film is finished in the Studio and before distribution it comes before a special commission of censorship which, broadly speaking, decides the questions: (1) Does it transgress the constitution of the U.S.S.R. ? ; (2) Does it offend public morality ?

This commission can ask for scenes to be deleted or re-shot as the case may be or can entirely scrap the film. Films are also seen privately by the artists, technicians and workers of the cinema industry at their own Club, where they have a chance to make suggestions.

This Cinema Club plays a great part in the hammering out of theory and development of styles and criticisms and productions, because like nowhere else in the world the producers, directors and cameramen are in the same "firm" and are able to criticise each other with the greatest of ease and with frankness that would appal any foreign film artist or technician. Some of the most thrilling

times I have ever had have been the verbal controversies in which some of the great Soviet masters, such as Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko have participated. In fact, quite often a producer will read his scenario to his colleagues and make mendations or augmentations according to their criticisms.

This frank criticism is also found in the Press reviews of films. There is no holding of punches or withholding of names. A spade is called a spade and no one tempers his criticism according to the reactions of big advertisers. This is a somewhat severe, yet healthy atmosphere for an artist, and something which is badly needed here.

COLOUR AND STEREOSCOPIC

THE Soviet Cinema Research Institute has been working on colour film since about 1932. The first feature film which was made in colour was *Nightingale*, *Little Nightingale*, by Nikolai Ekk (director of the famous children's film *The Road to Life*). This was a two-colour system which reached its finest expression in the full-length fairy tale film *The Little Hunchbacked Horse*, already mentioned. The colour specialists were very impressed by the superb use of the limited two-colour system and there is no doubt that if it had been in three-colour, it would have been hailed as a "world-shaking masterpiece."

Unfortunately, this colour development was hindered by the war, but, as I write, news has been received that the three-colour system is now in use and that a feature film called *Ivan Nikulin—Russian Sailor* was being shot in colour last year. This is a film of the Black Sea naval detachment that fought on the Kuban Steppes. It is being directed by the Moscow director, Savchenko. As soon as a copy is available, it will be sent abroad and everybody is waiting with interest to see what the Russians can do in three colours.

Information is available to show that in the realm of stereoscopic film the Russians are ahead of the rest of the world, although, of course, patents which are as good may be lying hidden in the safes of big American concerns. The fact is that Moscow actually has a cinema for the projection of stereoscopic films. It involves

no artificial eyes, such as red and green glasses, etc., and from those who have seen it I learn that the effect is awe-inspiring.

Semyon Ivanov, its inventor, is 35 years old, the son of a shoemaker in a little central Asian village. Because of the dire poverty of his parents he took to the road while still very young, trekking from Central Asia to Siberia and back and earning his keep as shoemaker, farmhand, smith, mechanic, actor and artist.

His passion for art brought him to Moscow at the age of 17, and there he began to study at an art school, but he did not stay long. He was attracted at the time to Museum work. It was the dull, flat surface of the pictures displayed at the museum which first made him imagine the effect that stereoscopic photos would produce if presented in cinema form.

When film circles heard of his work he was at once supplied with everything necessary for his experiments. Producers, cameramen and engineers were assigned to help him.

THE FIRST ONES

The first stereoscopic films produced in Moscow shortly before the war were very successful. The effects amazed the audiences. For the first time film fans saw birds that seemed to fly away from the screen nearly over their heads, saw crashing waves that threw liquid gems nearly into their laps.

In the main Ivanov's invention consists of a calibrated screen upon which two films, depicting the same scene from different angles, are simultaneously projected by the usual machines with an optical attachment. When the proper focus is found, both films merge into one and produce the effect of a three-dimensional picture. Much has been written about this stereoscopic screen composed of 36,000 very thin copper wires running in different directions in conformity with certain calculations. It takes about 112 miles of wire to make a screen of 25 square yards.

Ivanov has just presented his country with another innovation—the "integral" screen, a new development of his second discovery.

His remarkable inventions earned him a Stalin Prize. He also wears a military decoration. On the outbreak of the war he joined the People's Volunteer Force and found himself in Leningrad. Here he decided to put his knowledge of stereoscopies to use under front line conditions. He began to teach Soviet scouts to see the enemy with two eyes by using stereoscopic instruments.

At present Ivanov is working out methods for the mass production of his stereoscopic lens screens. Twenty stereoscopic cinemas are to be opened in various cities of the Soviet Union in the near future.

Thus a final dimension is now added to the cinema and it is quite clear that after the war we shall have stereoscopic colour sound-films which should be the most potent weapon science has ever handed to art. And, as always, its value is not in itself, but in its use.

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

ONE of the negative aspects of the introduction of sound-films was, of course, the raising of the barrier of language, so that a play or story that hitherto put over in terms of mime or silent visual image is now partly imagery and partly dialogue and, in many cases, entirely dialogue. Thus, when we come to see films of another nation than our own, several difficulties arise. As far as we in this country are concerned, American production, which is the largest in the world, is made in the English language (or as near as dammit), so that England has not been faced with the problem which Europe had of finding that all except home-produced films are in foreign languages.

There are two basic methods of showing such films to ordinary audiences. Either they are sub-titled, or "dubbed." Sub-titling involves in fact the concentrating of the dialogue into short sentences which are superimposed on the lower part of the screen. This means, naturally, that the spectator, not knowing the original language, loses a great deal of its finer points and misses a great deal of the visual side, because he spends most of his time reading the sub-titles. In a film with little dialogue it may not matter much, but in a film with a tremendous amount of dialogue (as for example, *Jacob Sverdlov*), the eyes are, unfortunately, most of the time on the changing sequence of sub-titles. This is how French films have so far been shown, for example, in this country, but, as they are only shown in specialised cinemas, it means that most of the people understand a good deal of the dialogue and only need the sub-titles to supplement what they miss. Which means, also that fewer sub-titles can be used.

But when it comes to Russian films quite clearly almost nobody in this country understands the dialogue or can even guess what it all means, and therefore many more sub-titles have to be used. Added to this difficulty is the fact that generally speaking popular audiences dislike sub-titled films. It may be that reading a title entails greater effort and is slower than listening to the same thing

spoken. Obviously more effort is required and more imagination. And the fact that such audiences are not forced to subsist on a fare of foreign films means they have less chance of getting used to it.

The other method is that known as "dubbing" a film.

TO DUB OR NOT TO DUB?

This is a very complicated process which, in the final result means that the original, say, Russian actors, now speak English or American.

The same problem arises as regards the audience's perception. British audiences are not used to dubbed films and one or two very popular French films so done before the war were a failure with commercial bookings. Here, however, new ground was covered by those of us who made the first dubbed version of a Russian film in English. So great was the interest in the Soviet Union that for the first time a dubbed foreign film had a wide popularity, e.g., the first Russian feature film to be dubbed was *In the Rear of the Enemy*, which has been shown in over 1,300 cinemas in Britain. So that despite a certain prejudice, it is clear that this is the only successful method of showing foreign films in England.

However, there is a great objection to this method artistically, because it involves the entire elimination of the original dialogue and the substitution of a foreign dialogue spoken by foreign actors so that the visual behaviour of a Russian actor has to be matched by the verbal behaviour of another actor. The whole secret is in this matching. Speaking from personal experience, I can say that it is one of the most difficult jobs that any producer has to tackle. How to render, for example, a Russian peasant speaking English, or a Mongolian chief? Add to this the difficulties of totally different social and national backgrounds and the problem becomes almost insurmountable.

The experiment was made with another Russian film—*Russian Guerillas*—whereby one person interpreted line by line what the Russians were saying while they were still heard in the background. But this was very severely condemned by the critics. So that those of us who have to deal with these problems are in somewhat of a dilemma. The public don't like sub-titled films—certain critics don't like dubbed films. However, it is clear that failing the production of films simultaneously in several languages, dubbing appears to be the only solution. In two Soviet films—*Tanya* and *Volga-Volga*—dubbing has been carried a step further whereby songs as well as dialogue are now in English. This is the most complex form of dubbing possible, and it remains to be seen how successful it will be.

The Soviet Union itself has to face this problem because although 100 million of the 190 million population are Russians, there are 150 other languages, and although films are made in the national languages of the large Republics such as Armenia and Georgia, it would be impossible to make films specially in the languages of the smaller nationalities.

Therefore a special dubbing studio in Moscow simultaneously dubs a Russian film into ten of the major languages, and sub-titles them in the rest of the languages. Certain of the films produced by the national Republics are similarly dubbed into Russian.

Regarding the Soviet films in Great Britain, no doubt Soviet films being in another language and having to be dubbed in this country come up against "sales resistance," which does not apply to American films, but nevertheless, there appears to be not only "sales resistance" in certain circles because of public habit, but also because of the prejudices of some private groups involved in cinema renting, distribution and exhibition.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE ?

IT is clear from the 1945 Film Plan which is appended to this pamphlet that a new trend is beginning in Soviet cinema.

The grim "fight to the death" themes of the equally grim historical period of 1942-43 are now giving way to a more elated victorious theme. The grimness is still there, but is more in the background and individual conflicts are more to the foreground. At the same time, more films of lighter themes are being produced—musical comedies, operettas, etc.

With the return of temporarily evacuated film production to the big studios at Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev which has already taken place, there is no doubt that the standard of quality in all respects will improve and a higher output be achieved.

Another interesting wartime development is the wider showing of foreign films in Soviet cinemas, in particular, British and American productions.

A natural interest has developed in the life and art of the Soviet's Allies, and this has meant British films reaching Soviet screens for the first time. Among features shown are the following :—

In Which We Serve, which had a great success and a high artistic evaluation from the Soviet critics. *Proud Valley*, featuring Paul Robeson, who is well-known to Soviet audiences, plus the unusual subject matter for the average film—the life of ordinary workers, in this case, in mining. The singing of the Welsh Choir as well as that of Robeson added to its popularity in that all-singing country. George Formby scored a resounding success in *Let George Do It*. He demonstrates once more that fundamental fact that the humour of the people is international.

Amongst the American films which have achieved a great success is *Mission to Moscow*, which, despite the obvious discrepancies that must exist in portraying living Soviet characters, yet because of its historic rendering and the fact that such rendering has never been done before, puts it in a special place in the Soviet Union.

Another film about the Soviet Union which is having a great success there is *North Star*. This is interesting to note. What it means in fact is that it proves to the rather sceptical Soviet public that foreign film studios can produce genuine sincere films about the Soviet Union, as well as the opposite such as they have produced in the past.

Lady Hamilton is also very popular, particularly for its lavish settings and its acting.

In the documentaries, such films as *Desert Victory* are of great interest, but the biggest impression in cinema circles was made by Frank Capra's *Battle for Russia*. Using exclusively Soviet film material, he has put together a film that is brilliant in its execution and the Soviet are not slow to recognise a master's touch.

There is no doubt that the Soviet public are eager to see more British, American and French films, and equally, no doubt, that the market is vast enough to take many more. Of course, with the Soviet Union distribution is simple. Once the State cinema organisation takes a film, its success depends solely on public popularity. Distribution facilities are automatic. There is no friction of any kind, or possibility of obstacles preventing the public getting even a *chance* to look at it, such as exists elsewhere. But, of course, these questions are linked up with the general problems of post-war planning and I have no doubt that as things are going now allied unity is growing stronger and stronger and the Second Front should finally convince any doubter of its reality forged in the furnaces of war.

AUDIENCES

IN conclusion a word must be said about the audiences in the Soviet Union. In general, there are two rules which apply to Soviet policy throughout the Arts. The first is that, in all the Arts, everything possible should be done to ensure that the world's great classics are made available to the whole Soviet people. The second is that, in producing his works of art, the Soviet artist should work for the whole people, and not for a small clique of intellectuals, connoisseurs, or personal admirers.

As a result of the application of the first principle, the standard of taste of the Soviet people is bound steadily to rise, as their familiarity with the classics raises the demand they make upon contemporary artists. As a result of the second principle, films are produced to suit the level of public taste and the demands of public interest as they are to-day.

There were 193,000,000 people in the U.S.S.R. before the Nazi invasion. Just under half of these were town or city dwellers, working in or connected with industry. The rest, a bare majority, were peasants, mainly enrolled in the collective farms. In 1917 the Soviet Union was a mainly peasant, mainly illiterate country; in 1939 it was mainly literate.

The audiences for whom Soviet films are produced are workers or peasants. Since there are still greater technical facilities for films in the towns than in the country, it would be true to say that, up to now, the majority of audiences have been town-dwellers. But with the development of village cinemas, mobile cinemas, out-of-door projectors and screens, and 16 mm. non-inflammable films, the rural audience has been steadily growing relatively to the urban audience. At the same time, as we have seen, the child audience is specially catered for, and the children's films are mostly highly pleasing also to grown-ups.

The fact that the U.S.S.R. contains a large peasant population, and that the town populations have, in the past fifteen years, been rapidly augmented by migration from the villages, gives a certain peasant flavour to the Soviet audience even in the towns. Hence a fact which inevitably must impress a British audience—so accustomed to the tempo and dash of the American film—Soviet films tend to be slow-moving compared with American, and even compared with British.

But with the greater interchange resulting from our Alliance, the influence of American tempo on Soviet audiences is bound

to affect the tempo of Soviet films also, alongside the more fundamental influence of industrialisation.

Since the Soviet producer must always bear in mind the vast extent of his audience, since his art is not hampered by commercial considerations, and since Soviet policy favours every tendency which brings actors and audiences closer together, we find that Soviet film producers, like their poets, authors and musicians, must keep an ear very close to the ground in their work. Any unreality of detail, concerning, say Red Army routine, the working of a railway depot, combine harvesting, or a workers' club will call down upon the guilty producer a positive hail of criticism, letters from the length and breadth of the U.S.S.R., telling him that "this is not good enough," it is not true to Soviet life.

As the Soviet public read more of the great world classics; as they see more of the world's great plays; as they have access to most of the world's greatest films outside their own; their taste, their demands on their own producers, are going steadily to become more exacting. It is this prospect, of an ever-growing audience, and of an ever more critical audience, that faces the Soviet film artists to-day. And, because Soviet films are a public service and not a commercialised concern, they will contribute their share in the future as in the past to raising the standard of world cinematic art.

APPENDIX

PROGRAMME FOR 1945

THE complete liberation of the U.S.S.R. has enabled the Soviet cinema considerably to extend its production plans for 1945. All studios evacuated to Central Asia early in the war have now returned to their home towns: Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa, Moscow and Minsk. All are busy producing new films. In addition to many full-length documentary and popular science films, Soviet studios will produce 47 feature films.

The 1945 plan has several categories. What is particularly noteworthy is the growing number of films produced by National Studios. A number of films will deal with various aspects of the war, one of the most interesting of which will undoubtedly be the

Lenfilm production *Army General*, directed and based on the scenario by Boris Chirskov.

Mosfilm studios are completing their open air scenes of *Day and Night* in Stalingrad, directed by Alexander Stopler, and based on Konstantin Simonov's scenario on the defence of the great Volga citadel. The main theme here is the friendship of the men and commanders of a Soviet unit defending its position in the face of furious Nazi onslaughts.

Director Mark Donskoy of Kiev studio is filming *The Unconquered* based on a story of the same title by Boris Gorbatoev, about the Soviet people who continued the struggle against the invaders in occupied territory.

The Vasiliev brothers will film their own scenario of *Leningrad*, depicting the defence of that great city.

A number of films will show the war effort of Soviet people to supply the front. Such a film is the Lenfilm production *Storm* directed by Grigory Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg, depicting the evacuation and reassembly of a Leningrad aviation plant in Central Asia.

At Kiev studios producer Leonid Lukov will film the second part of *Greater Life*, based on the scenario by Pavel Nilin, about the restoration of the Donbas ruined by the Germans.

Several films will depict the struggle of the Slav people against the occupationists. Among them there is *Yugoslavia*. Georgi Mdivanis wrote the scenario and it is being filmed by the Georgian director, Siko Dolidze.

Another is on *Poland*, the story of modern Poland filmed by Mikhail Romm.

An important category is that of historic-revolutionary films. Director Sergei Eisenstein has finished the first part of *Ivan the Terrible*. Sergei Yutkevich will direct the film *Dmitry Donskoy*, with Sergei Borodin's scenario about the outstanding Russian statesman and warrior of the 14th century, who routed the Tartar hordes on the banks of the Don.

Director Vsevolod Pudovkin has begun production of the film *Admiral Nakhimov*, the great Russian admiral of the 19th century.

There will be one on the *Battle of Grunewald*, scenario by Igor Lukovsky, to be filmed by director Vladimir Petrov, which shows how the Teutonic Knights were routed by the combined Slav forces of Russian, Byelorussian, Polish and Czech peoples at the beginning of the 15th century.

Of particular interest is the film *Fatelikhan Kubinsky*, to be produced at the Baku studios under the direction of A. Iskanderov and M. Mikayelov. This will show the progressive activities of Fatelikhan, who laid the foundation for the unity of the Azerbaidjan State in the 18th century.

Director Mokhail Chiaurelli in the Tbilisi Studios will film Peter Pavlenko's scenario *The Oath*, featuring the principal epochs in the history of the Soviet State, which will show how the Soviet people have fulfilled the oath sworn by Joseph Stalin at the grave of Lenin.

BIOGRAPHICAL

Several biographical films will include *Glinka*, the great Russian composer, scenario by Lev Amstam; *Abai*, directed by Grigori Roshal, about the Kazakh literary classic of the 19th century; *Song of David*, directed by Nikolai Samov and Joseph Tumanov, about David Guramishavili, the great Georgian poet of the 18th century; *Navoi*, directed by Kamil Yarmotov, about the Uzbek poet and statesman.

Comedy and musical comedy films will also increase in number.

Director Grigori Alexandrov has begun production of a comedy called *Screen Star*.

Semen Timoshenko will produce a film, *Winged Chariot*, about flyers of the Leningrad front.

Director Igor Savchenko recently completed his three-colour film called *Ivan Nikulin—A Russian Sailor*, and will continue to work on colour films. His next picture is to be a musical comedy entitled *Dowry*, based on old Russian vaudeville. Its action is laid in Moscow in 1813, when the victorious troops returned to the capital after Napoleon's defeat.

Director Protozanov, at the Yerivan studios, will work on the second part of his film *Khodzha Nasreddin* ("Adventures in Bukhara"), the story of the favourite Eastern hero and jester of the same name.

Directors Alexei Frolov and Boris Chirskov at the Mosfilm studios will direct the comedy *The Twelve Bridegrooms*. The story will take the form of a soldier's narrative, in which they will disclose the characters of their heroes, their ideals in thought and in practice. The action begins before the war and concludes after the close of hostilities.

The Georgian director, Shalva Managadze will direct the film *Stubborn Neighbours*, about life in a modern Georgian village, the theme being that of Georgian peasants collecting money for the Defence Fund.

At the Alma-Ata Studios director Dmitry Tarasov will direct the film *The Happy Sergeant*, about young folk returning to their homes after the war.

1945 will also see the filming of a number of classics, among them *Guilty Though Guiltless*, based on a play of the same name by the Russian classic dramatist, Alexander Ostrovsky. This will be directed by the director Vladimir Petrov, famous for his historic film *Kutuzov*.

Director Alexander Andrievsky will direct the stereoscopic film *Robinson Crusoe*, and director Vladimir Braun will screen several sea stories of Stenyukovich in the film called *Deep Sea Sailing*.

The children's studios "Soyuzdetfilm," will produce several pictures about Soviet youngsters during the war, their participation in the job of restoring cities and villages ruined by the Germans, rearing the new generation and the young people's devotion to the country. For small children there will be screen versions of Russian folk tales.

All enquiries regarding Soviet 35 mm. films should be made to The Soviet Film Agency, 5, Kensington Palace Gardens, W.8, Tel. Bayswater 3214, from whom a current catalogue of films for hire can be had.

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